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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

## INTELLIGENCE REPORT

22938

COUNTRY Syria

DATE:

SUBJECT Activities of Premier Mardam: Differences Between Mardam and President Quwwatli

INFO. is stated in Text

DIST. 2: March 1947

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PAGES

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SUPPLEMENT

ORIGIN

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1. A state of suspicion and latent opposition exists between the present Prime Minister, Jamil Mardam, and President Quwwatli and his representatives in the Cabinet. Mardam is busily mending his political fences and organizing a political party in view of the coming elections. To this new party he is rallying elements of the present opposition, such as Sabri 'Asali and Lufti Haffar. These maneuvers are regarded with great suspicion by President Quwwatli, and Mardam is under close surveillance at all times.
2. On his visit of 28 January to Aleppo, Mardam selected Ahmad Rifa'i to head his party organization in the north. After Mardam's departure, Rifa'i was constantly shadowed by plain clothes men, and persons with whom he was known to be in contact were picked up for questioning.
3. On 6 February Mardam visited Jebel Druze and pushed beyond Suwaidah to confer at length with Sultan Pasha Atrash, Druze leader. President Quwwatli is said to have attached to the Prime Minister's party on this occasion his personal trusty Abd-al-Karim A'idi, Muhafiz of Hauran. A'idi, however, was unable to be present throughout the conversation with Sultan Pasha.
4. On 10 February Col. 'Abd al-Wahab Hakim, on the pretext of an inspection of Syrian troops in Jebel Druze, also is said to have visited Sultan Pasha. Hakim is a well-known adherent of Mardam of long standing. He was recently, through Mardam's influence, promoted from Commander of the Mizzah Airport at Damascus to CO, Southern Area.

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Comment: [redacted] feels strongly that Mardam's visit to Jebel Druze was for personal political reasons, in order to secure Atrash's support for the coming elections. Source is not confident that the policy of the government in the Jebel can be carried out successfully before the June elections without armed conflict in that region, and a pretext for Trans-Jordanian intervention.

5. It is reported that the present press campaign carried on by the Syrian newspapers al Balad and al Qubes against Na'im Antaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Hikmat Hakim, Minister of National Economy, is by order of President Quwwatli. Antaki and Hakim are Mardam's closest adherents in the present campaign.

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